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THE

ANNUAL ADDRESS

OF THE

REV. JOHN STANNAGE,

MISSIONARY OF

he Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

IN FOREIGN PARTS,

AT ST. MARGARET'S BAY, NOVA SCOTIA,

TO HIS

Friends and Supporters in Jersey and Elsewhere.

BATH:
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THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

OF THE

REV. JOHN STANNAGE.

St. Aubin's, Jersey, Jan. 12th, 1853.

My dear Christian Friends,

It has pleased a mysterious, though gracious, Providence, to permit that I should continue in such a weak state of health as to render an absence from my mission necessary. I left my parish at the end of last September, in the charge of the Rev. W. R. Cochran, who was ordained by the Bishop as my substitute, his father, an old Missionary, promising to visit my people every month to administer the Lord's Supper. The Rev. T. D. Ruddle, who had engaged to assist me for one year, and who was paid in part by your contributions, was to leave at the end of the year. It was not, therefore, with the only object of recruiting my health that I obtained leave of absence, but it was also with the prospect of making room for a stronger and more efficient Missionary, which I hope Mr. Cochran will prove to be. Indeed, I regret very much that it was not in my power to leave two missionaries, instead of one, to labour in the four Churches and three other Stations which I have left behind me, and the wants of which rather increase than diminish. Several applications to this effect were made by me to the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," but their funds would not allow them to comply with my request. I have, therefore, determined, with God's assistance, to do all I can, while in Europe, to provide the means of support for an additional Clergyman in St. Margaret's Bay, which would be an inducement for me to return to the same field of labour,

should I regain my health, while your co-operation in this plan would enable you to assist in planting the Gospel *permanently*, in the Churches, to the erection of which you have so kindly contributed. My great wish, then, is to beg something of you towards the endowment of St. Paul's Church, St. Margaret's Bay, this being the oldest and most central Church in the parish, which I should place in the hands of the Incorporated Diocesan Church Society of Nova Scotia, to be invested by them, with a small sum already in their possession, for that purpose, they having promised to meet a certain amount raised by a grant of their own. Your contributions, in useful or ornamental articles, will be disposed of as formerly for the support of my Schools ; and the cash I may receive shall be applied as above stated, unless you express a wish to the contrary.

I wish I could adequately thank you, my dear Christian Friends, for all your past interest in my poor mission among the Fishermen of Nova Scotia, but that is impossible. Neither has my strength allowed me to see as many of you as I could have wished, since my arrival in Jersey, to thank you in person, as I was requested to do by my grateful parishioners. This is the reason why I take this mode of addressing you, as well as to give you a statement of the manner in which your last year's contributions were applied by me. It was as follows;—

Received since May, 1851, in cash and produce of articles sold, the sum of £88 0s. 4½d., currency of Nova Scotia.

Paid to Curate's salary - -	£40	0	0
——— Mr. Shaw, Schoolmaster -	10	0	0
——— Mr. Bowes ditto - -	6	0	0
——— Mr. Storey, ditto - -	3	0	0
——— New School-house, Dover	10	0	0
——— Levelling Church-yard and fencing it, to meet the people's own work -	12	0	0
	£81	0	0

A balance remains in hand of £7 0s. 4½d. towards £23 I have promised to the three Schoolmasters at present engaged in my Schools, and some articles were left in shops at Halifax for sale.

I trust that you will agree with me that the making a provision for another Missionary to assist me in serving the four Churches, and superintending the six Schools you have helped me to build, is an object well worth all my energies during my stay in this country. I am not sure, indeed, that I shall ever be strong enough to return to Nova Scotia. My medical adviser gives me but little hope of that kind. I can, however, assure you, that my heart is still in the work, and that if my return were all that was necessary to procure the permanent establishment of the Gospel, and our Protestant and Apostolic Church, in that part of the Lord's vineyard which has occupied the best portion of my life and thoughts, I should not hesitate to return, be the consequences ever so fatal to myself personally. The many humble believers I have seen dying in that place, and whom I have committed to the grave "in sure and certain hope of the resurection to eternal life" through the only merits of Christ—the four over-flowing congregations of poor, but well affected, Churchmen, whose behaviour in the House of God would do honour to any part of Great Britain, but who must be left to the danger of being drawn aside into the numerous sects which abound in those countries unless better supplied than they now are,—the six schools which were so promising when I left, and in which, being on our own ground, I had a special authority to go now and then and speak to the young of the flock, (one thousand of whom I had baptized,) in the name of Him who said "Suffer the little children to come unto me,"—together with the most affectionate and affecting farewell of all my parishioners on leaving them—all this is so often present to my mind, and appeals so forcibly to every Christian feeling, that I cannot but hope that many of you, my dear friends, will share with me n the desire to do something more for that mission than the mere erection of buildings. Let us, then, plant the knowledge of the only Saviour and Mediator of sinners for ever among them. For this purpose I know no better means than the institutions and doctrines of our pure and reformed Church. I am aware of the many calls upon your benevolence, but I know also that God has blessed many of you thousands of times above those I plead for, and that when the love of "Christ and of His Church constrains you," you can do a great deal. Churches in this country often cost thousands

of pounds to build, and generous individuals do not think that too much to give. Who knows but God will dispose the hearts of some such Christian gentlemen, or ladies, to give one thousand only to each of my four Churches. Nay, I should be satisfied and most grateful if I could obtain were it but one thousand for the whole mission. Is not God our best banker? And are not the riches of the Gospel of Christ the best interest we can have for our money?

If any of you desire to know what my views are, before they give their money, I would beg leave to say, that I am not inclined to follow any *party*, the Protestant Episcopal Church of England being, in my opinion, the most perfect compendium of Primitive Truth which can be well devised in this imperfect state. Any approach to superstition, or too much dependence upon mere forms, or any tendency to latitudinarianism, whether in the Church or out of it, are evils which should receive no countenance from any well-affected member of our Zion. The Church, indeed, must have forms, or it cannot exist long in a visible state any more than a mere sect can do. But, much as I think of our forms, I do not exalt them above their proper level, or put them, in any way, on a par with the substance, which is Christ himself and His all-sufficient atonement, *offered once for all and for ever*. There is as wide a difference between our forms and Christ, as there is between a shell and the kernel. I have always taken care to place the Bible above the Church, convinced that when the Word of God is properly studied it must invariably lead to Christ, and Christ himself will lead us to that legitimate authority without which there can be no well-ordered unity upon earth.

To give you some idea of my preaching among my people, I will relate an anecdote. One of my Brother-Clergymen, who had suspected me of being rather too high a Churchman, once paid me a visit; and calling upon an old woman of my congregation, he questioned her as to the ground of her hopes. "What do you depend upon for your salvation?" said he to her. The old woman looked at him with great earnestness, and then replied in her own simple broken English, "Why Sir, and surely what could I depend upon but Jesus Christ." "Where have you learned that?" he asked. The old woman seemed to wonder at this Minister's thinking her so ignorant, and exclaimed, "And surely, Sir, we have a Church, we have a Minister, I have

my books, and we hear this in church every Sunday!" My clerical friend saw that if I thought much of our forms, it was because I thought still more of Christ, and he has often since assisted me with large sums of money, as well as with his influence, in my missionary undertakings.

But our parting from my dear people was so affecting an event, that I hope I may be forgiven if I describe it to you, though at the risk of savouring too much of egotism. It would be impossible for me fully to relate the many hard struggles which took place in our bosoms, especially while taking leave of my best parishioners, who stood by me for more than eighteen years, and assisted me to the best of their abilities in the improvements which they, like myself, saw necessary for their native place. I attempted to go from house to house to take leave of all the people, and to give them a few last words of exhortation; but, after a few such days of visiting, I found that their tears and sobbings were too much for my nerves, and I could proceed no further. It was even with great difficulty that I could muster courage enough to preach a Farewell Sermon in each of the four Churches, and to administer once more to them the Holy Communion. It pleased God to enable me to do so, though in much weakness, and solemn and affecting were the scenes! All the communicants made it a point to be present, who came afterwards, with trembling hands and tearful eyes, to bid me adieu at the chancel railing. Our hearts were so full that we could not speak. Some were not satisfied with warmly squeezing our hand, they must also take it into both theirs, and press it to their lips! Each Sunday Scholar, after my last address to them in School, came to shake hands with Mrs. S. and myself, and this was the most affecting scene of all. Both teachers and scholars sobbed aloud! An old man present had to go behind the school-room for a while to give vent to his tears. On the day we left, all those who could procure carriages accompanied us twelve miles through the woods, and here, in sad silence, all too full to speak much, could only form good wishes for one another's future meeting in a better world, which were only seen in our mutual tears and hearty embracing of each other, thus being powerfully reminded of St. Paul's parting with his friends at Ephesus. It was especially pleasing to see those who had long been cold and distant, and even offended with me for trying to do them good,

coming forward to regret my departure, several such being in a flood of tears. My heart and my eyes fill while I write. How painful the thought that no provision is made for the increasing wants of such a Mission! May God, for His dear Son's sake, carry on the work in that bay which His unworthy servant has begun! May not one of my dear people perish for want of the means of grace and salvation; May godly and self-denying missionaries be sent among them, and may they find more pleasure in leading souls to Christ than in looking after worldly ease and comfort. And, oh! may many a heart among the wealthy and affluent in this land of plenty, in this beautiful climate, be stirred up to make the life of the missionary as comfortable as possible, that he may have as many inducements as can be to remain in such a place. This is a work of faith. In faith, then, let us work, and let us rest satisfied that "our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

Hoping you will excuse the appeal of an humble missionary,

I remain, my dear Christian Friends,

Your devoted servant in Christ

JOHN STANNARD.

N.B.—The missionary cases will have to be made early in March, so as to be forwarded free of charge by Messrs. Robins's vessels.

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